

Consumer decisions: The case of sustainable mobility behavior

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Research field “Innovation and sustainability research: Sustainable transition and innovation research in the context of climate change”

Research question 1 | Cluster 3

Links to showcases Steininger 2, Baumgartner 1, Bednar-Friedl 1, Schulev-Steindl 1, Meyer 1, Meyer 2

Background: The transition from a fossil fuel-based towards a renewable energy-based transport systems is characterized by a high path dependency and technological lock-in (Unruh 2000). The large majority of the global stock of cars is fossil fuel driven and in this way contributes to an increasing share of GHG emissions worldwide due to the continuing growth in passenger and freight activity that outweighs all mitigation measures (Sims 2014). It is overwhelmingly evident that radical interventions in order to reframe mobility related consumer decisions, e.g. by innovative infrastructure planning, will be necessary in order to escape carbon lock-in in the transport system (Driscoll 2014). The electrification of the transport sector will be an enabler for more sustainable mobility. However, from the social science perspective, a more fundamental transition including major behavior changes at the consumer side will be required as well.

Goal: The objective of this showcase is to gain a better understanding of the decision making of consumers in regard to their mobility behavior. Here, two research questions will be of central interest: Firstly, how are mobility-related decisions taken by demand side actors? For example, what factors influence the investment decision between different technologies for certain transport service categories, including the choice between different product-service-systems for transport? Secondly, what are appropriate measures that would support radical transition towards a low-carbon mobility system, while assuring inclusive and affordable mobility?

Methods and disciplinary background: Based on literature and secondary data analysis, we will conduct quantitative and qualitative empirical social research. We will analyze and model the demand side actors' behavior and decisions and will use the results for simulations and the development of scenarios.

References:

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